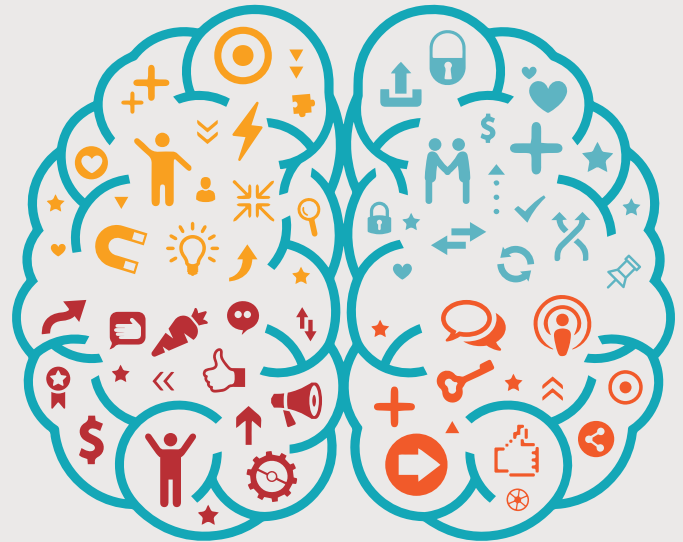


Content Marketing for Tech Buyers

Nuances Between Attracting Product & Services Leads

By Experience-Driven Strategists, Creators and Executors



Many companies have high expectations for their marketing. They may also want to run before they walk, without taking the necessary steps that generate consistent leads. But the most effective, lucrative marketing can't be turned on and off. Random acts of marketing don't fill your pipeline.

In fact, it takes six to eight touchpoints just to qualify a lead, [according to Salesforce](#). **Dr. Jeffrey Lant believes** you must contact your buyers at least seven times in an 18-month period before they remember you.

Marketing that consistently harnesses multiple touchpoint opportunities keeps your sales pipeline full. It leverages content to attract your specific tech buyer throughout their journey. And that buyer journey starts well before you discover a sales lead.

There's a substantial period when your prospects are doing their homework on topics relevant to your service or product. They're learning and forming opinions before you can identify who they are. This is the stage in the buying process when prospects are most open to your knowledge and guidance. But many companies fail to take advantage of this opportunity.

The 5 Effects of Content Marketing

Big brands fortunate enough to lean on their name and stable of sales reps often have an advantage on smaller firms. Yet, even the biggest industry players are smart enough to share content along their prospects' buyer journeys. By accommodating modern buyer behaviors, content marketing supports your sales efforts by:

1. Demonstrating industry thought leadership
2. Establishing trust and credibility with your target audience
3. Raising brand awareness and reinforcing your values
4. Building valuable target audience data and pipelines
5. Validating your offering, eliminating the "hard sell"

How your unique business leverages marketing content is dependent upon your industry, audience, and offering. But there are distinct marketing differences between service and product companies. While the following tactics may be best practices for one offering versus the other, your business could benefit from any of the outlined strategies. >>>>

Marketing Your Technology Service

As a services firm, you typically endure long sales cycles, building relationships over time. Your differentiators may be your insights, customer successes, approach, and/or project methodologies. But prospects don't consider these values until the sales process begins.

Your prospects rarely use search as their main source to find service companies. They search for content that guides their strategies or compares different solutions. Original content that answers these questions positions your brand as subject-matter experts. When the time comes to assess service providers, your company should be a natural consideration.

Using content to raise awareness

Blogs, guides, whitepapers, and infographics are common forms of educational content. That same information is valuable material for equally-effective speaking engagements—opportunities where your target audience and influencers are readily gathered.

Strategic partnerships can fast-track your lead generation. If you're a product integrator or solution provider, you can attract prospects at your partners' user conferences, webinars, and podcasts. Product companies benefit from a demonstration of their solution's value, and you get exposure to a new, relevant audience.

Third-party publications and online resources are paid partners that can also expose your content to new prospects.

Marketing Your Technology Products

Search engine marketing has played a big role for product companies. Your audience is searching for as much information about products that can solve their problems. This is especially true of solutions that automate business processes. Whether you're selling cloud applications or devices, you need to boost your visibility amidst the murky sea of competitors that may offer many of the same product features.

Using content to differentiate your product

Online demonstrations can be a powerful way to quickly compare your competitive features to similar products. The "under-the-hood" approach allows your prospects to imagine how your product would address their needs. Take it a step further by offering short trial periods, which give your prospect a better feel for your user experience.

Pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns that promote feature comparison guides or other valued content are equally effective. Offering an unbiased look at how your industry collectively solves common problems will position you as a valuable resource. And ultimately, that trust may be the difference that wins your business.

Syndicating your content on third-party trade publications or sending materials to contacts of other relevant databases helps you tell your product story to an unfamiliar audience. Rather than buying or renting cold lists, you'll benefit from the brand trust a publication or online community has already established.

Using Content to Continue Nurturing Leads

Even after your marketing content converts leads and fills your sales funnel, content continues to play an important role. Remember, prospects become customers after seven or more touches. And there's valuable content to provide at every stage of the buyer's journey. Providing case studies, explainer videos, or other relevant content helps you strengthen your prospect relationships and build a brand of trust and leadership.

Efficient marketing and sales teams create automated lead nurturing campaigns, strategically following up on leads who may not be ready to buy today. They evaluate trend and activity reports to gain intelligence on each lead and optimize their future follow-up.

Content is the heart of effective marketing. The question is: are you doing what it takes to achieve consistent success?